News Release
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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Sante et des Soins de longue duree

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LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS ASSUME NEW RESPONSIBILITIES TO HELP INCREASE ACCESS TO CARE AND REDUCE WAIT TIMES

Networks Give Ontarians Greater Say In Local Health Care Decisions

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is making it easier for patients to access local health care through Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) which officially take on their role for planning and co-ordinating services on April 1, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"LHINs will help patients find their way through a complex health system and increase access to quality care," said Smitherman. "By working closely with local health service providers, LHINs will help patients access care with fewer delays and more efficiently."

LHINs were created by the Ontario government to oversee two-thirds of the province's health care budget, and will work closely with residents and health care partners to determine the health care priorities and services required in their local communities. As of April 1, the 14 LHINs in Ontario will officially take on co-ordinating and funding responsibilities.

LHINs will plan, fund and coordinate services offered by hospitals, long-term care homes, Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), community support service agencies, mental health and addiction agencies, divested psychiatric hospitals and Community Health Centres (CHCs). The ministry will retain responsibility for overall planning of the health system and a number of provincial programs including health human resources and public health.

Building on the strengths of local health organizations, LHINs allow for better matching of health care resources to community needs.

"We're involving Ontarians in the planning and delivery of health care," added Smitherman. "Important health care decisions will now be made at the local level by those who best understand the unique needs of area residents."

Ontario patients can expect to see a real improvement in health care. Specifically, patients will:

- Benefit from different health providers working together to care for them;
- Experience fewer delays and disruptions, and shorter wait times in their health care services;
- Receive better, safer care from the health professionals that are best suited to provide that care;
- Receive better information about health services in their community, and have the ability to compare their wait times with other LHINs;
- Experience a health system that works better because there is less waste and duplication.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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